

William Thornton and Tristram Dalton, Commissioners to Thomas Jefferson, September 4, 1801, from Thomas Jefferson and the National Capital. Edited by Saul K. Padover.

Commissioners to Jefferson

Washington 4th. Sepr 1801.

Sir,

We have had the honor of your Letter of the 24th. and 29th. Unto which we take the earliest opportunity of answering.

We presume the impression you were under respecting our Subjection to the payment of the whole Debt of 250,000 Dollars to the State of Maryland, might have weight in your decision relative to the part we were to pursue in enforcing payment from the Debtors and we perceive that we have been deficient in our Information on that Subject. The State of Maryland have the power of subjecting us to the payment of only the last Loan on default of Payment of the Interest, but the debt of \$200,000 not being subject to the same procedure raises a doubt regarding your Instructions to us.

We have not only conceived the law of Maryland

authorised us to resell the property in default of Payment, but to repeat the Sales, and we have thus uniformly proceeded: it therefore gives us great satisfaction to find that we have the indirect approbation of such high authority. The Titles being still in us as Trustees and agents for the public we imagine would diminish the doubt of our power to sell the

Library of Congress

property to whomsoever it belonged, otherwise the spirit of the Act for the accommodation of Government might be defeated by common process.

We are in hopes that nothing will be left undone by the Debtors to raise such a Sum as will be necessary, and when we can have their assurances of what they expect and intend to do, we shall not fail to communicate them to you, with our opinions, which we acknowledge with sensibility ought rather to have been submitted than required, to meet your decision.

To the objects stated in your Letter of the 29th., we have paid particular attention and shall expedite them as much as possible.

The Returns that have lately been made are less favourable to our progress than we had supposed — the very dry and hot Weather that we have so long experienced, diminished much the progress of our Labourers, and we have now changed entirely our mode of operating

by which we can execute as much in One day as we have done in two. We have got strong ploughes, and two thousand Dollars will finish we hope the Roads you have recommended to our attention, in such a manner as will make them convenient and good. Half this Sum will finish rounding the Road to Rock Creek Bridge from the President's House, including the cut through the Hill. The other thousand will round the Road in New Jersey Avenue & first Street east on the Capitol Square. The Road is compleated to the seven Buildings in Sq. 118 and A Street north on the Capitol Hill. The whole Expense incurred on the Roads till the 1st Instant amounts to four thousand & eighteen Dollars. Our present Expenses on Pennsylvania & New Jersey Avenues amount to fifty Dollars per Day; but on a review of our Funds, we cannot proceed much further on the Roads unless we obtain Resources upon which we cannot at present calculate or presume on a favorable answer from the Secretary of the Navy.

Library of Congress

We have the honor to be &c.

W. Thornton

T. Dalton

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED-STATES, *Monticello*.

[Pp. 100–01, COMMISSIONERS' LETTERBOOK, Vol. 6, 1800–02, in the National Archives.]